NCA
VOC FOR IOP/FN
POLITICAL FEATURE NO. 1-0325 MARCH 9, 1976
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REFLECTIONS OF A JEWISH EMIGRE

ANNCR:

A WELL-KNOWN SOVIET JEW WHO WAS LONG DENIED A PERMIT TO LEAVE THE SOVIET UNION FOR ISRAEL ARRIVED IN ISRAEL LAST WEEK. DOCTOR ALEXANDER LUNTZ, A MATHEMATICIAN TOLD CHARLES WEISS IN JERUSALEM THAT SOME OF THE FOREBODINGS EXPRESSED ABOUT THE EFFECTIVE PRESSURE ON THE SOVIET UNION TO LET ITS JEWS LEAVE HAD THE EFFECT OF SIMPLY INCREASING PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS.

VOICE:

DOCTOR LUNTZ IS VERY LOW KEYED. IN ENGLISH, HE SPEAKS SOFTLY, EVEN HESITANTLY. HIS MATTER OF FACT TONE IS OUT OF CHARACTER WITH THE TALE OF PERSECUTION AND DEPRIVATION HE TELLS. HE'S BEEN AN ACTIVIST IN THE CAUSE OF EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL FOR YEARS, BUT HIS OWN PERSONAL TRIALS BEGAN ONLY IN NOVEMBER, NINETEEN-SEVENTY-TWO WHEN HE APPLIED FOR A PERMIT TO LEAVE THE SOVIET UNION.

DOCTOR LUNTZ WAS FORTY-EIGHT AT THE TIME. THE DAY AFTER HE SUBMITTED HIS APPLICATION, HE WAS FIRED FROM HIS JOB IN MOSCOW AS HEAD OF THE INSTITUTE FOR ELECTRONIC CONTROLLED COMPUTERS. THE INSTITUTE ITSELF WAS CLOSED. BARRED FROM ANY OTHER JOB DESPITE HIS QUALIFICATIONS, HE PROVIDED FOR HIS WIFE AND TEENAGE SON BY GIVING PRIVATE MATH LESSONS AND TRANSLATING SCIENTIFIC TEXTS FROM GERMAN INTO RUSSIAN. HE WAS ALSO HELPED, FOR THESE THREE AND A HALF YEARS, BY WHAT HE CALLED FRIENDS OF THE SOVIET JEWS IN THE WEST. THEY USED TO SEND MONTHLY CHECKS.

DURING PRESIDENT NIXON'S VISIT TO MOSCOW IN MAY NINETEEN SEVENTY-FOUR, HE SPENT TWO WEEKS IN PRISON. HE CALLS NINETEEN SEVENTY-FIVE A BLACK YEAR FOR SOVIET JEWS. NOT ONLY WERE THE NUMBER OF IMMIGRATION PERMITS SHARPLY CURTAILED, HE SAYS, BUT THE SECRET POLICE CRACKED DOWN ON ANY JEW WHO EXPRESSED A WISH TO GO TO ISRAEL. HE BELIEVES THERE WERE SEVERAL REASONS FOR THIS, BOTH CONNECTED WITH THE SOVIET UNION'S DESIRE TO WIN ECONOMIC BENEFITS IN THE WEST. ON THE ONE HAND, THE SECRET POLICE, THE K-G-B WANTED TO SHOW THAT NOT SO MANY JEWS WERE REALLY INTERESTED IN LEAVING THE SOVIET UNION. THAT WAY, HE SAYS, THEY COULD DEMONSTRATE THAT IN FACT THE PERMITS ISSUED WERE MORE OR LESS IN LINE WITH DEMANDS, AND THAT CRITICISM IN THE WEST, AND PARTICULARLY IN THE UNITED STATES, OF THE WAY THE JEWISH QUESTION WAS BEING HANDLED WAS BASELESS.

ON THE OTHER HAND, DOCTOR LUNTZ BLAMES THE STEPPED UP PERSECUTION DIRECTLY ON STATEMENTS BY AMERICAN LEADERS. HE SAYS BOTH PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER HAD DECLARED IN EARLY NINETEEN SEVENTY-FIVE THAT PRESSURE ON THE SOVIET UNION SUCH AS THE JACKSON AMENDMENT TO THE TRADE BILL MIGHT BRING THE AUTHORITIES TO BEAR DOWN HARDER ON THE JEWS. THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED, HE SAYS, BUT NOT BECAUSE OF THE PRESSURE, BUT BECAUSE THE SOVIET UNION WANTED THIS VIEW TO BECOME CURRENT IN THE WEST. ONCE IT WAS STATED, HE ARGUES, THE K-G-B SET OUT TO PROVE IT.

DOCTOR LUNTZ SPENT HIS YEARS OF FORCED IDLENESS IN MOSCOW STUDYING HEBREW AND HE HAS A FAIR COMMAND OF

THE LANGUAGE. INSTEAD OF GOING TO HEBREW SCHOOL ALONG WITH OTHER NEW IMMIGRANTS HERE IN ISRAEL, HE DEVOTES MOST OF HIS TIME NOW TO PUTTING OUT FEELERS FOR A JOB, AND TO DOING WHAT HE CAN TO HELP THOSE OF HIS FRIENDS STILL IN THE SOVIET UNION SURVIVE UNTIL THEY TOO CAN GET OUT.

JS/PBM